

St. Mary's School

Short Plays and Recitations

By S. M. A.



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Short Plays and Recitations



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Little Cinderella

CHARACTERS

MRS. FIELD.

MAUD, *her daughter.*

GERALD, *her son.*

AMY, *little niece of Mrs. Field.*

GRANDMA, *mother of Mrs. Field.*

MRS. DALY.

PHYLLIS, } *daughters of Mrs. Daly.*

MYRA, }

ANNIE, *her adopted child.*

KATIE, *a maid.*

ELINOR, }

BERTHA, } *friends of Maud.*

BESSIE, }

SCENE—*In the home of Mrs. Field. Several children in fancy costumes are moving about gaily. — Phyllis and Myra enter together and greet Mrs. Field.*

Mrs. Field. Good evening, my young friends. Make yourselves at home until Maud arrives. She is putting the last touches to her costume as the fairy god-mother.

Phyllis. You look like one yourself, Mrs. Field, or rather like a distinguished queen. Are you going to take part in our little play?

Mrs. Field. (*Laughing*) Yes; is it not absurd at my age? But my young son Gerald, who is to be the Prince in the fairy tale, coaxed me to play the part of the Queen-Mother who gives the ball. So behold me arrayed as such. Ah! here is the young prince himself. I will leave you to talk together. (*Moves away.*)

Myra. Good evening, Prince Charming! You bear your name well.

Gerald. (*Laughing*) "Fine feathers make fine birds."—You are the two proud sisters who left poor little Cinderella at home, are you not?

Myra. Yes; it is an easy part to play.

Gerald. Where is Annie? Didn't she come with you?

Phyllis. (*Annoyed*) Why, no; of course not.

Gerald. Why not? Isn't she your sister?

Phyllis. (*Proudly*) No, she is not. Annie is just an adopted child, whom Mother took from the Orphan Asylum to help take care of the baby.

Gerald. O, I see. She's one of the nicest girls I have met, all the same. (*Moves away.*)

Phyllis. (*Displeased*) I wish Mother would make that girl stay in the kitchen where she belongs.

Myra. Well anyway, she can't go to parties with us, for she hasn't any party dress. (*They walk aside.*)

(*Maud arrives arrayed in appropriate costume.*)

Maud. How do I look as the fairy god-mother?

Elinor. Fine! But where is your magic wand to turn the pumpkin into a coach?

Maud. Here it is. Be good, or I'll wave it over your heads and turn you into mice.

Bertha. (*Laughing*) O that's beyond your powers, Fairy God-mother; you can only turn mice into horses.

Maud. How do you know that I have not learned some new tricks since I made Cinderella's glass slippers? — O that reminds me! I must see if the little lady who is to wear them has yet arrived. (*Hastens away.*)

Bertha. Who is to take the part of Cinderella?

Elinor. Our little neighbor, Elsie Breen.

Bertha. The part, I think, would well suit Amy, Mrs. Field's little niece.

Elinor. Yes, but the party is given in her honor, you know, before she returns to her home in the West; and she will merely take a place with the audience.

Mrs. Field. Now, children, if you desire to offer your good wishes to my little niece, she is ready to receive you in the drawing-room; follow me.

(*They all go out on one side. Grandma and the maid*

Katie enter on the other.)

Grandma. (*Looking around*) Are you sure I did not leave my knitting here, Katie?

Katie. Perhaps you did, ma'am; but the children have so upset things in their excitement that I think nothing is left in its right place.

Grandma. (*Amiably*) Well, if the dear children are enjoying themselves, we can stand some disorder. Youth passes away all too soon.

Katie. When the heart keeps young like yours, ma'am, the best part of youth remains. Now, sit down in this easy chair, and I will look for your knitting. — Ah! here it is under the sofa, and the needles all there, too, for a wonder! (*Hands the knitting to Grandma*). But I fear you will find there are some stitches dropped.

Grandma. (*Smiling*) Then I must pick them up,—as you, poor Katie, will have to repair the damages done in the room by these thoughtless young people.

Katie. (*Putting the room in order*) Ah! well, you have taught me, ma'am, to be patient with them, for, as you often say, we were once young ourselves. (*Knocking heard outside.*) Now, who is knocking at the door? (*Goes to see, and ushers in a little girl with a bundle.*) This little girl says she has a message for you, ma'am.

Grandma. Yes? Tell her to come here.

Annie. These are the doilies you ordered, ma'am, and Mother hopes they have not come too late.

Grandma. No, they are here in time to be placed on the supper-table. (*Examining them.*) They are very pretty and well embroidered; tell your mother that I am much pleased with them. — Katie, please show these doilies to Mrs. Field, and then place them on the supper table, as my contribution to the festival. (*Katie starts to go.*)

Annie. (*Timidly*) May I—may I look at the supper-table?

Grandma. Of course, my dear.—Katie, take this little girl with you to see the supper-room, and give her some of the good things, too. (*Katie and Annie go out.*)

Poor child! Why should she not take her place at table with the other children? Alas! that some little ones should be poor and hungry while others are happy and feasting!

(*Mrs. Field enters.*)

Mrs. Field. Are you comfortable, dear Mother? I fear that the noise of all these excited children fatigues you.

Grandma. O do not mind about me. I am glad that the children are enjoying themselves.

Mrs. Field. (*Sitting down*) I wished them to spend a pleasant evening, but at present, it looks as if all our fine plans would end in failure.

Grandma. Why, how is that? What has happened?

Mrs. Field. Well, it is almost time to begin the play. Our audience has assembled, and all our young actresses are here and ready to play their parts except one, the most important of all.

Grandma. How unfortunate! Are you speaking of little Elsie Breen?

Mrs. Field. Yes, I have sent a messenger to find out the cause of her delay. I do hope the child is not sick. (*Rises.*)

Grandma. I trust not. Her absence would spoil everything.

Mrs. Field. Well, I must keep the children amused, while we are waiting for Elsie. (*Exit.*)

(*Annie returns.*)

Annie. O the supper-room is beautiful! and the hall where the children are going to dance is wonderful with lights and flowers and lovely things.

Grandma. (*Aside*) Poor little one! I am sure she is longing to join the more favored children.—Will you sit down, my dear, and stay with me a little while? You see I am not going to the party, either.

Annie. (*Sitting down*) Thank you. I would love to stay here with you till Mother comes.

Grandma. So you expect your Mother here this evening.

Annie. Yes, ma'am. She says it will be too late after the party for Phyllis and Myra to go home alone; so she will come for them, and she told me to stay in the kitchen till she came for us. But I would much rather remain here, if you will let me.

Grandma. Of course, dear child. But if your two sisters are at the party, why are you not there, also? Did you not receive an invitation.

Annie. O no! I did not expect one,—(*sighing*) though I'd love to — just to look at the children playing and dancing in there. (*Glances aside.*)

Grandma. I do not understand why you should not be there as well as your sisters.

Annie. O they are not my real sisters, though Mother—that is, Mrs. Daly, wishes me to call them so.

Grandma. Is not Mrs. Daly your mother?

Annie. No, ma'am; I am an orphan whom she took into her house to help take care of the baby and do little jobs.

Grandma. But she treats you well, does she not?

Annie. O yes, Mrs. Daly is kind to me; and she sends me to school with her daughters; that is why I happen to know Gerald and most of the girls who are here to-night. But I think Phyllis and Myra are ashamed of me, because I am poor and can not dress like their set.

Grandma. Then they are foolishly proud and ill-natured. Besides, their mother works to support herself and them.

Annie. Yes, but they are always coaxing her to give them money to spend on their dress; of course, I would not do that, as I have no right to ask for anything.

Grandma. (*Aside*) Poor little one! She seems gentle and refined, and belongs to a good family, I am sure.

(*Mrs. Field hurries in carrying Cinderella's ball-dress. Gerald, Phyllis, Myra, Elinor, Bessie, Maud and others follow.*)

Mrs. Field. May we disturb your quiet once more, dear Mother? Word has come to us that poor little Elsie is too ill to appear in the play this evening, so we must find some one to take her part. — Bessie, let me see if this dress would fit you. (*Holds it up side of the child.*) No, it is too long; you would look lost in it.

Bessie. I am glad, for I would not know what to say. (*Moves away.*)

Phyllis. O Cinderella doesn't have to talk. Will you try the dress on me, Mrs. Field? I think it would fit.

Mrs. Field. (*Holding up the dress beside Phyllis.*) No, it is too short for you; so you will have to remain one of the wicked elder sisters.

Elinor. (*Aside*) That part suits her better, anyway.

Myra. (*Laughing*) Now, Fairy God-mother, show your powers and find a Cinderella to fit the dress, as in the story you created a dress to fit Cinderella.

Maud. No magic power is needed. Perhaps you would like the part yourself.

Myra. Yes, I would. I think it would be lovely to be a princess, if only for a few hours.—Please try the dress on me, Mrs. Field.

Mrs. Field. (*Doing so*) I am afraid you are too tall, but we could change your high-heeled slippers.

Maud. The one who plays Cinderella must be able to wear the slippers I prepared for her.

Gerald. It's my part, as the Prince, to see that they fit her.—Sit down, girls, and I will try this slipper on each one of you; if it doesn't fit, you can not be Cinderella, and I won't marry you at the end of the play.

Elinor. (*Laughing*) O that would be a dreadful misfortune! Let me look at the slipper. (*Gerald holds it up*) No use! I know my foot would not fit into that little shoe.

Phyllis. Try me, will you?

Gerald. (*Comparing shoes*) No, you will have to keep your own.

Myra. I think I could wear the slipper, Gerald. Let me try. (*Tries to squeeze her foot into the slipper, but without success*).

Elinor. (*Laughing*) Really, Phyllis and Myra, you play your parts of the proud, elder sisters to perfection. To complete the resemblance, Gerald should try the slipper on your little sister, who is sitting so quiet and neglected in the corner.

Gerald. And I will, too. (*Starting towards Annie*).

Phyllis. (*Trying to prevent him*) O Gerald! it's useless. Besides, Annie is not dressed for a party.

Gerald. Neither was Cinderella; but the Fairy God-mother played her part so well that her god-child was the best dressed and most admired lady at the ball.

Maud. (*Taking the fancy costume from her mother's hands and standing near Annie*) And I am ready to do the same thing now.

Gerald. (*Kneeling on one knee before Annie*) Now, Annie, let me try this little slipper on your foot, and if it fits you, I shall dance with you at the ball and you shall be my future Princess.

Annie. That would be very pleasant. Well, try.

Gerald. (*Joyfully*) See, the slipper fits her perfectly!

Maud. Now, Annie, stand up, please, and let me see if this dress suits your size. (*Holds it beside Annie.*)

Elinor. O it's just right!

Gerald. I am so glad I have found my princess.

Mrs. Field. Really, we have succeeded very well in finding a substitute for Elsie.—Maud, take Annie to the dressing-room and array her in all the finery prepared for Cinderella. (*They move away.*)

Phyllis. (*Aside to Myra*) Why didn't Mother keep that child at home?

Myra. (*Aside to Phyllis*) I am so angry I could shake her. (*All go out except Mrs. Field and Gerald.*)

Mrs. Field. Now, that difficulty is settled, so I shall sit down for a few moments' rest. (*She does so.*)—Gerald, you seem to be on good terms with that little girl; who is she?

Gerald. She's in my class at school, Mother, and the nicest girl there.

Mrs. Field. Then why did she not receive an invitation to our party, like her elder sisters?

Gerald. I think she did, but probably they wouldn't tell her, they're so proud and hateful.

Mrs. Field. It is very strange; I do not understand.

Grandma. Perhaps I can explain the situation. While we were alone together, little Annie told me that she is not Mrs. Daly's child, but is living in her house somewhat as a dependent to help with the household work.

Mrs. Field. Then Phyllis and Myra are not her real sisters.

Gerald. (*Warmly*) I don't care, she is just as good as they are, and vastly more agreeable.

Mrs. Field. (*Smiling*) That is right, my son; stand up for your little princess. (*Katie enters.*)

Katie. Mrs. Daly is here, ma'am, and asks if she has come too early for her daughters.

Mrs. Field. Why, yes, Katie; our party has hardly begun. But invite Mrs. Daly to come here. (*Exit Katie.*) There are some questions I should like to ask her.

Grandma. Yes, she might tell us more about this dear little girl under her protection. I admit I am deeply interested in her. (*Mrs. Daly enters.*)

Mrs. Field. Good evening, Mrs. Daly; pray be seated. Our

children are still amusing themselves, so we can have a quiet talk here.

Mrs. Daly. Thank you.—(*Bowing to Grandma.*) It pleases me to see you looking so well, Mrs. Hunt.—I am certainly glad to rest for a little while, as I have been visiting a sick neighbor who needs continual care.

Grandma. You are always kind and charitable, Mrs. Daly, and we have just been talking of your charity towards the little orphan, Annie.

Mrs. Daly. O that is hardly a charity, as the dear child is so good and thoughtful that she helps me very much about the house,—(*sighing*) more than my own daughters, who, I fear, are somewhat spoiled.

Mrs. Field. Do you know anything about little Annie's parents or past history.

Mrs. Daly. Very little. Merely that her father died several years ago, and her mother was killed in a railroad accident a few miles from here. As Annie seemed to have no relatives to claim her, she was placed in St. Luke's Orphan Asylum. While visiting the institute, I saw and became interested in her, and finally took her home with me.

Mrs. Field. A school friend of mine was killed in that accident. I know she had one little girl about Annie's age; I wonder if this could be her child.

Mrs. Daly. You could ask her, for she once mentioned her mother's maiden name, though I have now forgotten it.
(*A number of the children return.*)

Amy. Grandma, would you not like to see us dance the minuet?

Grandma. You would give me great pleasure, my dear; it would recall my youthful days.

Mrs. Field. Who will amuse your audience in the meantime?

Amy. O they are being entertained by the orchestra.

Mrs. Field. Very well; give us an exhibition of your skill.

Maud. Take your places, children, and show Grandma how well you can dance an old-fashioned minuet. Prince Charming and Cinderella will take the lead.

(*Directions for the steps and movements are given in any school books of Folk Songs and Dances, such as "Hinman's Gymnastic and Folk Dancing, Vol. 4," published by A. S. Barnes & Co., 118 East 25th St., New York.*)

Grandma. (*Applauding softly*) Bravo, dear children, you have performed the dance as well as your ancestors in the days of Martha Washington. (*All the children retire except Annie, Maud, and Gerald.*)

Mrs. Field. (*Calling Annie*) Did your fairy god-mother teach you to dance, Cinderella, when she changed your apparel?

Annie. (*Smiling*) No, I learnt those steps at school. (*The clock strikes*) Is it twelve o'clock? Like Cinderella of the story, I must hasten home. (*Sees Mrs. Daly*) O Mother! I hope I have not kept you waiting.

Mrs. Daly. No, my dear; I have been talking to Mrs. Field, and I am glad that you have been enjoying yourself.

Annie. O yes, I have had a lovely time. I fear I should like to be Cinderella always.

Gerald. I wish you were, too. Anyway, you might come and live here with Mother and the rest of us. We are almost as nice as the people in the fairy tale.

Maud. "Almost"! I flattered myself I was a very nice and amiable god-mother.

Annie. So you were, Maud, and I am truly grateful to you and Mrs. Field for the pleasant evening I have spent with you all.

Mrs. Field. I trust it will not be the last, my child. Tell me, was your mother's name before her marriage Lilian Haven?

Annie. (*Surprised*) Yes; how did you know?

Mrs. Field. I did not know, but I guessed it from your resemblance to the dear friend of my school-days. I know about the sad accident that deprived you of a mother's love and care, and, if you are willing, I should be happy to take the place, so far as I can, of the dear one you have lost.

Annie. O you are very good, and I should love to come and live with you if — if Mrs. Daly does not need me.

Mrs. Daly. I will not stand between you and happiness, my dear child. You have been a comfort to me, and done your duty well and faithfully while you lived in my house. Heaven has rewarded you, and I am pleased that you will now have a comfortable home and friends to love and care for you. Go to your new mother, who is waiting to take you to her heart.

(Annie goes to Mrs. Field who puts her arm affectionately around her.)

Mrs. Field. Yes, my child; it will be my aim to make you happy and give you a mother's affection.

Gerald. (Bowing to Annie) Welcome to our home, Cinderella
I shall always be your devoted prince.

The Trial of the Weather

Mother Earth. I have heard so many complaints about my servant the Weather, that I must examine into the matter. My daughters, Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter, should know how he behaves, so I will question them.

Spring, what do you know about the conduct of my servant, Weather?

Spring. Many persons complain of him, Mother; but as their statements do not agree, would it not be well for you to hear what they have to say? Then let Weather defend himself against their charges.

Mother Earth. You are right, my daughter. Send for him, and I will give him a fair trial.

Summer. Weather is here, Mother. He is always with us in some form, but he changes his appearance so often that it is hard to recognize him.

Mother Earth. That is not a good sign; only persons who are ashamed of themselves try to disguise their appearance.

Weather. Pardon me, Mother Earth, but I am well known to every one under any form. I merely change my appearance to satisfy others. But (*sighing*) it is very hard to please these human beings.

Mother Earth. You may be right, but I have promised to listen to the charges against you. — Autumn, what do those girls by the door say against my servant.

Autumn. They make several complaints, but the boys do not agree with them.

Mother Earth. Well, I will listen to them all.

First Girl. We were having a lovely time by the seashore; then the weather changed, and it became so cold that we had to hurry away.

Second Girl. My mother bought me a beautiful new dress, and then the weather became so rainy that she would not let me wear it.

First Boy. But when the weather grew cooler, it was just fine for out-door sports. O what fun we had!

Second Boy. And it was grand to go roaming through the woods, hunting squirrels and gathering nuts.

Third Boy. (Grumbling) But we had to go back to school when the cool weather came, and there's no fun in that.

Mother Earth. I see that even the boys do not agree in their opinions, so I shall listen to other witnesses.—Winter, what do your friends say?

Winter. I will let the young people speak for themselves.

Third Boy. O it's just grand when cold Weather comes, scattering the white snowflakes and freezing the lakes and rivers.

Second Boy. Yes, that's the Weather for me, when we can glide over the snow in sleds or sleighs, and go skating on the hard ice.

Third Girl. But we girls have to stay in the house half the time for fear we shall catch cold.

Fourth Girl. And the old people say they hate the cold weather because it brings them rheumatism.

Mother Earth. I begin to think my servant the Weather has a hard time trying to satisfy persons of all ages and occupations.

Spring. I think you will find it so, Mother Earth, if you listen to the complaints of men and women during my three months' reign.

Weather. Yet I put on my most attractive appearance during your reign, fair Spring, and try to make myself agreeable to everybody.

Spring. And do you succeed?

Weather. Alas! I fear I do not,—so unreasonable is this race of men.

Farmer. But the showers you bring are so frequent that we are hardly able to plant the seeds for our crops.

Weather. Then I will arrive later with my rain storms.

Second Farmer. No, no; don't do that; all the seeds that we have planted would rot in the soil.

Weather. Well, I might hold back the clouds altogether, and give you perpetual sunshine.

Third Farmer. O no; nothing would grow; and when the crops fail, we are poor the whole year.

Young Girl. And we need the April showers to bring out the buds and leaves and flowers that we all love so much.

Second Girl. But we do not want any rain at Easter-time, or we shall not be able to wear our beautiful new hats and gowns.

Mother Earth. A very important consideration!—Well, Summer, do the people in your domain agree better as to the kind of weather that would suit them?

Summer. I fear not, Mother Earth. But they may speak for themselves.

Schoolboy. I like the heat of summer because it brings vacation.

Working Boy. *Grumbling*) You wouldn't like it so well if you had to work. The weather is always too hot for my comfort. I would like to have a cool cloud over my head every day to protect me from the burning rays of the sun.

Farmer's Boy. How do you think the crops would ever ripen, if the sun did not shine on them?

Fruit-Seller. And what would become of my trade, if the sun did not ripen the fruits?

Young Girl. I do not like the sun, because it brings out the freckles on my face.

First Boy. Who cares about the freckles on your face? But we boys care a great deal about the red-cheeked apples that the sun ripens for us.

Second Boy. Yes, the more sun the better.

Third Boy. But a cloudy day is better for fishing.

Fourth Boy. And a rainy day swells the rivers.

Third Girl. O I don't like the rain; it makes the roads slippery when we go riding, and spoils our fun when we wish to have a picnic in the woods.

Mother Earth. Enough, enough, my children; I will listen to no more of your complaints. I see that my servant the Weather is not to blame for his failure to give general satisfaction. He has tried his best, but it is impossible to please every one.

Your Heavenly Father, who sends the rain or sunshine, heat or cold, knows what is best for you. Trust Him always, and thank Him for His blessings.

The New Governess

CHARACTERS

MRS. BAYLEY, (*"Aunt Jane"*)

MISS BELINDA, *her elderly friend.*

MARJORIE }
ALICE } *Nieces of Mrs. Bayley.*
LOTTIE }

BOB, *their young brother.*

GERTRUDE, *friend of Marjorie.*

ELSIE, *little friend of Lottie.*

HANNAH, *a maid.*

SCENE—*The city home of the three sisters.*

Gertrude. You do not seem very enthusiastic, Marjorie, about your visit to the country.

Marjorie. How can I be? I am sure it is going to be dreadfully dull in that stupid place, with no one of my own age to talk to, and nothing interesting to see or do.

Gertrude. Then why do you go?

Marjorie. Because I must. Father is going to Europe on business and is taking Mother with him. They say we are too young to be left alone in our city home with just Hannah the maid, and there is no one to keep house for us.

Gertrude. I thought Mrs. Bayley had consented to come and spend the vacation here with you.

Marjorie. No, Aunt Jane came to see what sort of creatures we are, before inviting us to spend the summer on her farm; and though she is satisfied that we are not altogether wild animals, yet she says she could never consent to be cooped up in a city house during the hot months.

Gertrude. Well, I can hardly blame her. I wish I had the chance of spending the vacation in the country.

Marjorie. (*Eagerly*) I wish you would come with us. Then I wouldn't mind spending the summer on a farm.

Gertrude. I should certainly be delighted to accompany you; but you forget, my dear Marjorie, that I should need to have an invitation from Mrs. Bayley.

Marjorie. Well, I shall ask her to include you in the family party.

Gertrude. O Marjorie! don't do that. I am sure she thinks she has already enough young people on her hands. Besides, I really can not go with you. I must get some position and work during the holidays.

Marjorie. Why must you?

Gertrude. Well, you know that since Father died, Mother has been obliged to work to support herself and me. She seems tired out, and now that my school-days are over, I intend to work and give Mother a chance to rest.

Marjorie. Well, I respect your decision, and wish you success in your plans; though I think a few months in the country would do you much good, after your hard work at school.

(*Alice and Lottie run in.*)

Alice. O Marjorie! what do you think? Aunt Jane says she is not going to let us "run wild" all during the holidays, but that we must have "regular hours of study"!

Lottie. (*Pouting*) I don't want to study when all the other girls are playing and having a good time.

Alice. Aunt Jane says we must take all our school-books with us to the country, and spend a part of every day "improving our minds". A fine vacation we shall have, if she carries out that program!

Marjorie. (*Laughing*) Evidently you do not appreciate the privilege of improving your mind while your schoolmates are neglecting theirs. But how did you learn this plan of Aunt Jane's.

Alice. (*Hesitating*) Well, I didn't listen; I was just playing hide-and-seek with Lottie, and while I was hiding under the library table, Aunt Jane came along with her friend,—what's her name?

Marjorie. Miss Belinda.

Alice. Yes, that precious, prim old maid,—

Marjorie. O Alice, that's not polite.

Alice. Now, don't you begin to give me lessons, — I shall have enough all summer.

Marjorie. Well, what did Aunt Jane say?

Alice. What I told you, about improving our minds and all that. Then she told Miss Belinda that she knew of a "very respectable young woman of forty-eight—"

Marjorie. Young? at forty-eight!

Alice. I didn't say that; Aunt Jane said it,—and that she had invited this very respectable old woman—I mean young woman, to be our governess for the summer and keep us out of mischief. What do you think of that?

Marjorie. Well, if the matter is all settled, there is nothing to say about it.

Alice. But it isn't quite settled. Miss — Respectable-Young-Woman is to call here this afternoon and be inspected by Aunt Jane and prove her fitness for the important work of training our young minds, etc. I wish she'd break her neck on the way here!

Marjorie. O Alice! don't say that; it's wicked.

Alice. Well, we don't want her. It's easy for you to be good and preach, for you have finished your school-days, — you lucky girl!—but think of poor Bob and Lottie and me, who will have to spend hours every day doing stupid tasks for that tiresome old piece of respectability.

(Bob enters laughing.)

Bob. What are you girls holding a council about? the new governess? She'll have some trouble catching me and "taming my animal spirits," as Aunt Jane says. My chum Bill lives down in the country close to Aunt Jane's farm, and we are planning to have a jolly time fishing, swimming, and boating.

Alice. (Grumbling) O boys always manage to have a good time; but there will be no fun for me.

Bob. (Laughing) O you don't appreciate your privilege in having an experienced Public School teacher impart lessons of wisdom to you during the holidays.

Alice. What do you know about her?

Bob. A great deal. I've been making inquiries and I have found out that our new governess has been teaching the Second Grade for twenty-five years.

Alice. (Indignant) A teacher of the Second Grade! and I

am ready to go into the Eighth! I won't have her. What does she know?

Bob. (Laughing) I can't answer that; but she has heaps of Discipline, — I heard Aunt Jane say that, — and she'll make you walk straight.

Alice. You talk as if she were already here, and she hasn't been engaged yet.—Gertrude, won't you come and teach us during the summer? You are a High School graduate, and carried off all the honors of the class.

Marjorie. A happy inspiration, Alice! — You said, Gertrude, that you wished to get some position this summer; would you be willing to take that of governess in our family for a few months? The work would not occupy you more than a few hours of the day, and you could rest and enjoy yourself during the remainder of the time.

Gertrude. The plan attracts me very much, Marjorie; but would your Aunt have confidence in me as a governess? She knows that I have just left school, and she will probably think that I am too young and inexperienced.

Marjorie. O I will sing your praises for you, declare that you were the most brilliant scholar in the class, etc. Do say you are willing. I should love to have you as a companion in the country, and you see that the children want you.

Alice. We'll be as good as angels, and give you no trouble; won't we, Lottie?

Lottie. Yes; please come.

Bob. (Laughing) You are wise not to make me promise that I will be an angel. But I'll behave myself, Gertrude, if you don't give us too big a dose of "Discipline."

Gertrude. You are all so encouraging that I have almost made up my mind to present myself before your worthy Aunt as a candidate for the position she destines for another. But it takes a brave heart!

Marjorie. O do go and talk to Aunt Jane about it. She is now in the library, and I am so anxious for you to make arrangements before that school-teacher arrives. What is her name, Bob?

Bob. Miss Hobbes, and she's due here at four o'clock sharp. I heard that through the telephone, when there was nobody around. I took the message, but I haven't yet given it to Aunt Jane.

Marjorie. Well, don't give it until Gertrude has had a talk with her. Do go right away, Gertrude; I am so eager to have the question settled.

Gertrude. Very well, since you all wish it, I will go; though I admit I am trembling as if I were going to my execution.

Marjorie. O keep your courage up. Good luck and a speedy return! (*Gertrude goes out.*) Do you think Gertrude has any chance?

Bob. Not the shadow of one!—as you would know if you had heard Aunt Jane talking about DISCIPLINE, in capital letters. Gertrude is just the right kind of girl, but when Aunt Jane looks at her over her big spectacles, and compares her with her idea of a solemn, straight-backed teacher, she will call her a pink-faced baby. See if she doesn't!

Alice. Well, I won't do a thing for that horrid, respectable Miss Hobbes.

Lottie. Neither will I.

Bob. (*Laughing*) Hear that! A strike in the nursery!

Marjorie. Well, we must find some means of preventing Miss Hobbes from talking to Aunt Jane, and have things settled before she arrives. O I have an idea!

Bob. Bravo! What's it worth?

Alice and Lottie. Tell us what it is.

Marjorie. It's this: before that Public School teacher has time to get here, I am going to dress up as Miss Hobbes,—Aunt Jane has never seen her, you know,—and present myself as a candidate for the position. Then I'll conduct myself in such a way that Aunt Jane will refuse to engage me. Will you all help, if I tell you what to do?

All. Yes, yes; it will be great fun.

(*Gertrude returns.*)

Gertrude. You all seem to be having a more agreeable time than I had.

Marjorie. Did not Aunt Jane receive you well?

Gertrude. O I'm frozen stiff! She looked me up and down, remarked on my youthful appearance, and solemnly declared that she could not assume the responsibility of confiding the welfare of her nieces and nephew to so young and inexperienced a person.

Bob. Nonsense! her nephew can take care of himself.

Alice. (*Dolefully*) Then you won't be our governess?

Gertrude. I'm afraid not, Alice; my hair is not sufficiently gray.

Lottie. I like your brown curly hair better.

Gertrude. Thank you, my dear. But the fact remains that your good Aunt will not permit me to conduct your youthful footsteps in the paths of knowledge and virtue.

Bob. (Laughing) Too bad! I had counted on your leading us through the meadow paths where the strawberries grow.

Gertrude. Very practical! but our pleasant schemes can not be realized.

Marjorie. We shall see about that. I do not so soon give up our delightful plan. Come with me and I will tell you about the conspiracy we have formed.

(They all go out except Lottie.)

Lottie. (To her doll.) You ought to be very glad, Carlotta, that your mamma is not going to Europe, and leaving you in care of an Aunt who was never a little girl,—at least, I think she never was little like you and me, or she would let us play all the time during the summer holidays. I shall not be cruel and make you go to school now, but let you have a lovely time. You may do just what you like,—except fall into the bath-tub, because that takes the color off your face. I know it is natural for people who drown to get pale; but if you once lose your color, poor dollie, you can never get it back again; so you must keep away from the water.

(Hannah enters leading Elsie by the hand.)

Hannah.—Here is your little friend Elsie who has come to see you. But you had better go and amuse yourselves in the play-room, for I think your aunt, Mrs. Bayley, is coming here with her friend.

Lottie. O then I don't want to stay here. She makes me sit up too straight in a stiff chair. Come, Elsie. *(They run out.)*

Hannah. The poor young things! They will sadly miss their own good mother, I fear, before the summer is over.—I must tidy up this room. If there is a single chair out of its place, Mrs. Bayley will notice it and be displeased. *(Dusts and places the chairs.)* I wonder if Master Bob will ever be able to stop his pranks, and behave in the proper way that will satisfy his prim and particular aunt. *(Exit.)*

(Mrs. Bayley and Miss Belinda enter.)

Mrs. B. Of course, Belinda, I should like to have you go back to the farm with me; but if you think that your delicate health would suffer from the presence of so many excitable young people, I shall not urge you.

Miss Belinda. I thank you for your renewed invitation; but I fear that the noise and agitation of these restless children would be too much for my nerves.

Mrs. B. I understand your feelings. Indeed, I do not know how I shall be able to endure the turmoil myself; but I feel that it is my Christian duty to see that these young people are removed from the temptations of the city during their parents' absence.

Belinda. Your self-sacrifice is truly admirable, my friend.

Mrs. B. I have no intention, however, of letting them run wild in the country; I shall secure the services of a responsible person to watch over their conduct, and, in fact, keep them occupied several hours a day with some useful studies that will improve their minds and characters.

Belinda. You are perfectly right, my dear friend, and their parents ought to be eternally grateful to you.

(Hannah enters.)

Hannah. A lady to see you, ma'am. She says that you expect her.

Mrs. B. Ah! yes; you may conduct her here. *(Exit Hannah.)* That must be Miss Hobbes, the lady of whom I was just speaking, though I did not expect her so early in the afternoon.

Belinda. (Rising) I will go to the library while you are talking with your visitor.

Mrs. B. Do stay; I should be glad to have you present at this interview, and then give me your opinion of this person whom I may employ as governess for my young charges.

Belinda (Resuming her seat) Very well; since you wish it, I will remain.

(Hannah conducts the visitor in and then retires. Marjorie disguised as the new governess advances towards her aunt.)

Mrs. B. Miss Hobbes, I presume? You are welcome. — My friend, Miss Greene. — Pray be seated.

Marjorie. (With changed voice) I believe you requested that I should call upon you?

Mrs. B. Yes; I have heard you spoken of as a person of ability and of considerable experience in matters educational.

Marjorie. O yes! I have spent a good part of my life with children, and know pretty well how to please them.

Mrs. B. Ah! well,—my object at present is rather to find some one who will instruct them and train them to correct habits.

Marjorie. I can do that beautifully; I am great at Discipline.

Mrs. B. That is what I wish above all things. I will send for the children whom I wish you to instruct.—(*Rings*)—Hannah, please tell the children, Alice, Robert, and Charlotte, that I wish them to come here.

Hannah. Yes, ma'am. (*Exit.*)

Mrs. B. Miss Greene and I are members of the School Board in our district, and know the necessary qualifications of a teacher.

Marjorie. (*Aside*) They certainly look stiff as a board. —I am sure, ladies, that I shall be able to satisfy you. I have had lots of experience in the school-room.

Mrs. B. (*Aside to Belinda*) Not very dignified language for an instructor of youth!

Belinda. (*Aside to Mrs. B.*) Her manner is certainly flippant.

Mrs. B. Your appearance, Miss Hobbes, is rather more youthful than I had expected.

Marjorie. (*Cheerfully*) O that doesn't matter. I could wear a gray wig in the class-room, if you like.

Mrs. B. (*Sternly*) Gray hairs without wisdom are of little avail.

Marjorie. Oh! I have a heap of wisdom in my upper story; you'll find that out, if you take the trouble to question me.

Mrs. B. (*Stiffly*) It is unnecessary.—

(*Alice, Bob, Lottie, and Elsie, enter.*)

You may put some questions to these young persons, and, in fact, conduct a class session, and I shall be able to judge of your attainments.

Marjorie. Very well. — Sit down, children.—How am I to call them?

Mrs. B. The two older girls are my nieces, Alice and Charlotte, and the boy is my nephew, Robert.

Marjorie. Well, I shall begin by calling the roll.—That's what they do in all schools.

Mrs. B. (Impatiently) Nonsense! These are the only pupils you will have, and they are all here.

Marjorie. Yes, but it's DISCIPLINE, you know, and I am great at that.

Belinda. (Aside) Really, my friend, I think you have been deceived regarding the qualifications of this would-be governess.

Mrs. B. (Aside) I shall soon find that out.—(*Hands Marjorie a paper*) Here are a few test questions which I gave in our district school. You may make use of them to ascertain the degree of knowledge possessed by each of these young persons.

Bob. I say, Teacher, don't be too hard on us. Remember, it's vacation time.

Marjorie. All right. (*Glances over the paper.*)

Belinda. (Aside) I do believe that woman winked at him.

Mrs. B. (Aside) Her manner is very extraordinary. Well, we shall note her way of imparting knowledge to her scholars.

Marjorie. The first question on this paper refers to History.—

Alice. (Waving her hand) I am good at that; ask me.

Marjorie. Very well. You have heard of Napoleon Bonaparte, who, though a great man, had one trait of littleness; how could he have corrected that defect?

Alice. By wearing high heels.

Marjorie. Very true; I see you are an intelligent child. (*During this examination, the two ladies look at each other in astonishment, shake their heads, and give various signs of disapproval.*)

Bob. Ask me about Geography; that's what I know best.

Marjorie. Very well. Perhaps you know that the earth is round, and not flat or square.

Bob. Of course; but don't ask me to prove it; it's too much bother.

Marjorie. Then tell me why it is said that the sun never sets on the British dominions.

Bob. (Reflecting) Well—I guess—it is because God is afraid to trust an Englishman in the dark.

Marjorie. A very good answer.—Now Lottie,—I mean, Charlotte,—show your knowledge of Arithmetic, and give me some tables of denominate numbers.

Lottie. No, I won't; I haven't learnt any.

Marjorie. But you know something about pints and quarts and gallons; don't you?

Lottie. O yes; I remember now that 60 gallons make one hedgehog.

(The other children giggle and nudge one another)

Marjorie. I see you have got the general idea. Since you know something about the animal kingdom, perhaps you can mention some species of the cat family.

Lottie. O yes! There's the father cat, the mother cat, and the kittens.

Marjorie. Very true.—Now, my little one,—what is your name?

Elsie. Elsie.

Marjorie. Well, Elsie, you have learned to spell, I suppose?

Elsie. Just a few words.

Marjorie. Well, begin by spelling your own name.

Elsie. E-l-s-i-e.

Marjorie. Good. Now your family name.

Elsie. That's all there is to it.

Mrs. B. A teacher with tact will discover a method of ascertaining her pupils' family names, even when the children are too young to know that they have one.

Marjorie. O of course. Well, Elsie, when your Mamma speaks to your Papa before company, by what name does she call him?

Elsie. *(Surprised)* She doesn't call him names; she likes him.

Mrs. B. That is enough for the little ones. Please show your ability to teach the older children some simple facts of science.

Marjorie. Certainly, Madam. I have made a specialty of science.—Alice, can you quote one of the rules regarding heat?

Alice. No, ma'am. I never studied any.

Marjorie. Well, if I tell you that "Heat expands and cold contracts," can you give me some examples?

Alice. *(Reflecting)* Well, in summer the days are long and in winter they are short.

Marjorie. A very good example and shows your powers of observation. Now give the definition of a vacuum.

Bob. (*Waving his hand wildly*) O I know; let me answer that.

Marjorie. Very well; define the word.

Bob. A vacuum is a large empty space where the Pope lives.

Marjorie. Correct. Now tell me the approximate yearly rainfall in your native State.

Bob. O that's easy! The approximate rainfall is mostly in the springtime.

Marjorie. You are probably right,—but I don't know much about it, because—well—I come from a different State.

Alice. You haven't asked us anything about Physiology and Hygiene, and I've studied lots about that.

Marjorie. Then we might skip that subject for today.

Mrs. B. (*Stiffly*) No; it is a very important branch of education, and I desire to observe your methods of imparting valuable facts.

Marjorie. (*Cheerfully*) Very well.—Alice, where is the alimentary canal?

Alice. (*Pouting*) O that's too hard.—(*Reflects*) But I think it's a canal in the northern part of Indiana.

Marjorie. Probably it is. Now tell me some simple remedies to prevent disease.

Alice. Well, I know that small-pox can be prevented by fascination.

Marjorie. Perhaps you mean vaccination, but it is about the same thing.

Belinda. (*Aside*) What a remarkable display of ignorance!

Bob. Now ask me something.

Marjorie. I see on this paper a very practical question: "What is the chief cause of indigestion?"—Can you answer that?

Bob. O yes! The cause of indigestion is trying to make a square meal fit into a round stomach.

Marjorie. Very true. I perceive that you have a mathematical as well as scientific turn of mind. Perhaps you can also tell me why nature provided us with two ears but only one mouth.

Bob. I suppose it's because one mouth can do the business of both eating and talking; but we have two ears so that

what we hear at school can go in one ear and go out by the other.

Marjorie. Very sensible. I shall be careful not to pour too much wisdom into one ear.

Mrs. B. (Stiffly) I fear, Miss Hobbes, that your instructions are not of a nature to elevate the minds of young people or to impart noble ideals.

Marjorie. (Cheerfully) O you haven't heard me preach to the youngsters; I can give them beautiful moral lessons.—Now, children, let me urge you to form good habits while you are still young and avoid bad habits.

Bob. O we hear all about that at Sunday School.

Marjorie. Yes, but I wish you to do your own thinking. Now tell me (*slowly and impressively*), what is it that we find so easy to get into and so hard to get out of?

Bob. Bed.

Marjorie. That is my experience, also.—Now, Alice, I will ask you a few questions about "Ethics for Young Ladies."

Alice.—O I ain't goin' to study that.

Marjorie. But you may some day, and—

Mrs. B. (Indignant) Surely, Miss Hobbes, you will not allow so ungrammatical an expression to pass uncorrected?

Marjorie. O no, of course not.—Alice, you must never say "ain't goin' "; it is not correct.

Alice. Well, what do you want me to say?

Marjorie. Listen, and I will conjugate the verb for you: I am not going; he is not going; we are not going; you are not going; they are not going.—Now, have you seized the idea?

Alice. Yes'm. There ain't nobody goin'.

Marjorie. It certainly seems so. Your reasoning is entirely correct.

Mrs. Bayley. (Rising indignantly) I think, Miss Hobbes, I have seen and heard enough of your methods of instruction, and I must inform you that they do not meet with my approval. What is your opinion, Miss Greene?

Belinda. I agree with you, Mrs. Bayley, in believing that the kind of teaching we have witnessed is not of a nature to benefit the minds of the young persons intrusted to your care.

Mrs. Bayley. I regret to inform you, Miss Hobbes, that I can

not engage you as a governess for my young nieces and nephew.

Marjorie. (Meekly) Very well, Madam. I must seek some other employment. Good-by! *(She turns to the left, but stops at the door, after the two ladies have bowed stiffly and gone out at the right.)*

Alice. (Laughing and dancing about) O what fun! Weren't we model pupils, Marjorie?

Marjorie. (Laughing and throwing off her disguise) As much as I was a model teacher.

Bob. Queer that Aunt Jane didn't approve of you!

Marjorie. Well, I think we have settled the fate of Miss Hobbes. I am sure Aunt Jane will never wish to hear her name again, still less engage her as your governess for the summer.

Alice. But we are not sure of having Gertrude.

Marjorie. Well, Aunt Jane is now more likely to consider Gertrude's request.

(Hannah hurries in excitedly.)

Hannah. O Miss Marjorie! Do come downstairs at once: your Aunt Jane needs you. Some men have brought in your friend Miss Gertrude on a stretcher, and—

(Marjorie hurries out.)

Alice. O Hannah! is she dead?

Bob. What happened? Do tell us about it.

Hannah. I don't know all the details. But the men said they pulled her out of the river half-dead.

Bob. Out of the river! What was she doing there?

Hannah. It seems that a child fell from the bridge, and Miss Gertrude jumped into the water after her and saved her life. Now poor Miss Gertrude is unconscious, and—

Alice. O I hope she will recover, she is such a dear girl.

Bob. Wasn't she brave to risk her life to save another's. That's the right kind of girl!

Hannah. But she may lose her own life.

Alice. Well, she's a real heroine, anyway. *(Marjorie returns.)*
How is Gertrude?

Marjorie. I am happy to say that she has recovered consciousness, and does not seem to have suffered any injury from her exploit. As she is now wrapped in dry, warm

clothes, she says she is perfectly comfortable, and will soon be ready for another swim.

Bob. That's the kind of girl for me!

Alice. I wish she were coming to the country with us.

Marjorie. I haven't told you the rest of the story, the best news yet. Aunt Jane is so much impressed by Gertrude's self-possession and self-sacrifice that she has quite changed her opinion of my friend.

Alice. (Eagerly) Will you ask Aunt Jane to let Gertrude go to the country with us?

Marjorie. It is all settled. Aunt Jane says that a young woman who knows how to swim, and isn't afraid to go into the water to save a drowning child, is just the one to look after young people in the country.

Alice. (Eagerly) And she will come as our teacher?

Marjorie. Yes. *(Smiling)* Aunt Jane prefers her to Miss Hobbes.

Bob. Hurrah for our New Governess!

New Year's Eve

CHARACTERS

EILEEN,
MAUD,
EMILY, } *her three little sisters.*
BETTY,

MARION, cousin of Eileen.

Young Girl representing the "Old Year."

Young Girl representing the "New Year."

Maud. (Grumbling) I don't want to go to bed. It's New Year's Eve, and everybody else is having a good time while waiting to see the Old Year out and the New Year in.

Emily. (Pouting) That's what it is to be little. Eileen is nineteen now and Marion is seventeen, quite grown-up young ladies, so they are in for all the good things; while we youngsters have to stay in the nursery, or be packed off to bed when anything interesting is going on.

Betty. What's going on?

Maud. O you are too little to understand, Betty; but it's the end of the year, and everybody is celebrating the occasion.

Betty. But isn't another year coming?

Maud. Yes, of course, but it's a different one, or a different kind, or something, that will arrive at just twelve o'clock; then all the bells will ring.

Betty. O I want to stay up and hear them.

Emily. That's what we all want, and we will, too.

Maud. Well, what shall we do to pass away the time? Down stairs it's lively enough; the grown-up people are having music and games and everything pleasant; while we have to keep quiet.

Emily. We'll have to do something, or we shall all fall asleep.

Betty. And we wouldn't hear the bells ring at midnight.

Emily. I tell you! We'll all sit around the fireplace and Maud will tell us a story.

Maud. Very well. *(They all settle comfortably around the fireplace. Betty holds a doll in her arms.)*

Maud. Now what kind of story shall I tell you?

Emily. A ghost story, of course. Night is the time for that; for somehow, ghosts seem foolish by daylight.

Maud. What a little philosopher! But a ghost story may frighten you, and then you'll scream.

Emily. No, we won't. It will just make shivers run down our backs, and that will keep us awake.

Maud. I believe Betty is beginning to nod already.

Betty. *(Straightening herself up)* No, I'm not. I just leaned over to see if dollie is comfortable. Begin your story.

Maud. Well, once there was a bad man—

Emily. Once? I thought there were many of them at all times.

Maud. Perhaps there are; but this was a specially extra bad one. Well, he had been drinking too much lemonade or something, and he wanted more, but he hadn't any money.

Betty. Why didn't he go to work?

Maud. Bad men don't like to work; they'd rather steal.

Betty. And did that man steal?

Maud. *(Impressively)* Yes, and murder, too. He knew of a carpenter that lived near the edge of a forest, and he went to his house one night and said, "Give me your money or your life."

Emily. And which did he get?

Maud. The carpenter, who was a good and brave man, said, "I won't give you either." Then the bad man killed him. But before he took his money, he had to get rid of the carpenter's body, because you know it's dangerous to be found near a dead body: you might be hanged for it.

Emily. Well, I don't intend to murder anybody; so go on with your story.

Maud. The thief took the dead man and buried him under a tree in the forest; then he hurried back to the lonely house. The wind began to howl and cry "Oo—oo—oo," and it sounded to the murderer like the cry of the dead man.

(The children shudder and huddle together.)

Emily. Ugh! it must have been awful.

Betty. I guess that man wanted to cover up his head.

Maud. After a while, there was a little moonlight, and the murderer began to look for the dead man's money; but in every room, somebody all in white seemed to be looking at him through the window.

Betty. Was that the ghost?

Maud. Wait, and I will tell you. The figure in white beckoned to the wicked man—this way (*she stands up and imitates the gesture slowly and solemnly*), and though the thief was shaking all over, he had to follow.

Emily. Then what happened?

Maud. The white figure led him on and on to the edge of a precipice and then suddenly disappeared. But the wicked man couldn't stop, but tumbled over the edge of the rock and broke his neck.

Emily. (*Shuddering*) Ugh! I wouldn't like to go through that forest.

Betty. (*Sleepily*) Then the man wasn't hanged?

Maud. No, but isn't it just as bad to break your neck?—And after that time, a black cloud always hung over that part of the forest.—Look at Betty! I do believe she is fast asleep.

Emily. Well, let her sleep; she is too little to sit up till midnight; but I shall. Did you finish the story? (*Rests her head on a sofa-pillow.*)

Maud. Almost. After that, nothing would ever grow in that dreadful place; the flowers drooped and died, the grass withered, and the birds would not sing there. (*Slowly and softly*) The winds sighed, and blew softly—softly—. I declare! Emily is sound asleep like Betty.—Well, I am not going to sit up all alone. I think I will take a little nap, too; when the bells ring at midnight, they will wake me up, and I shall be ready to bid farewell to the Old Year and welcome to the New. (*She reclines her head and goes to sleep.—After a brief interval, Eileen and Marion enter.*)

Eileen. (*Glancing at the sleeping children.* Evidently, the children decided that they would not go to bed, but would sit up, like their elders, to “see the New Year in.” Yet it looks as if sleepiness had overcome their resolution, and they are now happily in the land of dreams.

Marion. We will not arouse them, but let them sleep on peacefully until the midnight bells ring forth, and then perhaps the children will awaken by themselves.

Eileen. Would it not be entertaining to give them a little "Mystery Play" at that time, and see the effect on their young minds?

Marion. You mean that we might bring up here some of the masqueraders in the drawing-room?

Eileen. Yes. The children seem to expect that the Old and the New Year will appear before them at midnight in visible form; so let us keep up the illusion.

Marion. It is a good idea; and at this hour of the night, they will not distinguish clearly between illusion and reality.

Eileen. You are right. Come, and we will explain to our friends the part they are to play. *(They go out softly.)*

Maud. *(Awaking slowly and looking around bewildered.)* What has happened? and what was I doing here?—O yes! I remember; we were waiting to hear the midnight chimes, and I believe we all fell asleep.—Listen! I hear the bells ringing now!—But they are not gay and joyful, as I thought they would be, but sad and solemn! I wonder why? O yes, I know: they are ringing for the passing away of the Old Year. Then the New Year will come, like a bright smiling angel. Oh! I am so anxious for his arrival, for I am sure he will bring me beautiful gifts of all kinds.

(The Old Year enters slowly.)

Old Year. So, my child, you are impatient for the Old Year to be gone. But was he not a friend to you during the past twelve months? Did he not bring you many blessings that brightened your pathway?

Maud. *(Hesitating)* Yes, but there were troubles, also; and every day you brought some hard task to do.

Old Year. 'Twas for your good. Ah! 'tis thus they answer everywhere. Each one remembers the sorrows he has borne, but the joys are all forgotten. Twelve months have I lived among these mortals, scattering with a lavish hand blessings and joys of every kind, wealth and comfort, health and happiness! now I go, and no thanks do I receive for all my services. They long for my departure, and remember only the strokes of justice I was forced to give, in

chastisement for benefits despised. Ah, such is man! But I will leave him my parting blessing, and may it, like soft sunset rays, brighten his pathway yet awhile. (*Moves on.*)

Maud. (*Aside*) The Old Year is going, and I shall never see him again.

Old Year. Yes, child, I am going—going whence I came, to the shores of eternity; but you mistake if you think never to see me more. One day we shall meet again at the gates of Paradise, and what I hold, written here (*showing a scroll*) will open those doors to you or close them forever.

Maud. Oh! what can it be? Do give the paper to me; you might lose it.

Old Year. No, my child; what is once given to my keeping, I never lose and never forget. This paper contains the record of your deeds during the last twelve months,—good and bad, they are all written here.

Maud. Oh! let me have the paper, that I may efface the record of my evil deeds.

Old Year. Too late, my child; these marks are indelible, and, whether written in golden letters by your Guardian Angel, or in jet black characters by the enemy of man, so they must remain, till examined by the heavenly warden at the gates of Paradise, to form your passport within or to be your writ of condemnation.

But farewell. Time beckons me on and I must go. My reign is ended, and I leave this crown to my successor, the young New Year. (*Takes off his crown.*) Tell him to govern well, and may his subjects be grateful for his favors.

For you, my child, remember the parting lesson I have given you. The bright New Year will bring another scroll like unto this, but new and clean, on whose white page naught yet is written. Yours is the power to fill its spotless page with golden letters recording good deeds accomplished and virtues practised. For this, was your young life given you; beware of staining the new record with darkened characters. I go. Farewell! Farewell! (*Moves slowly off.*)

Maud. The Old Year has departed, and bears with him the

history of my life during the past twelve months, as other Years have done before him. Oh! if I had but thought of that sooner, and had taken care to see each Old Year depart laden with a precious burden of my good deeds! But, alas! the days and months slipped past, and carelessly I let them go, thinking only of drawing from each such delights as it could offer. I have been like the thoughtless butterfly that flits from flower to flower, sipping dainty sweets from each, but never thinking of laying up treasures for the future.—

Hark! how merrily the bells are ringing! They must be welcoming the New Year. The air seems filled with music, and the chimes are pouring forth notes of joy and gladness.—

Who is this approaching? O it is the bright New Year!

New Year. (*Coming in gaily*) Hail, all hail! my pretty child. We have never met before, and yet you know my name?

Maud. Yes, New Year; I have been awaiting your arrival, knowing you would come about this time. The Old Year left you his parting blessing, and bade me offer you this golden diadem. (*Presents the crown.*)

New Year. I accept it with respect, for it has been the honored crown of many a venerable head. In placing it on mine, I but accept an honor that must remain with me a short time only, then pass to others.

Maud. Yes, but you bear in your hand a scepter to be used by you alone. (*Pointing to a gilded wand inclosing a scroll.*)

New Year. True; can you guess the use of this?

Maud. Yes; the Old Year instructed me as to its meaning, and I am determined that none but golden characters shall appear inscribed upon it.

New Year. 'Tis well, dear child. May the record of your life written here be such as will make your Angel smile with joy as he imprints the golden letters. Then will it be the magic word that will open the bright portals of Heaven to you, and form an immortal poem that you will sing with joy through all eternity.

Maud. I shall try to heed your lesson, bright New Year.—
See! my little sisters have awakened, and gaze at you
with friendly eyes, for they know you wish them well.
Before departing to convey your message to other homes
this holy eve, give us your blessing, for we know that
you have come from Heaven and would lead us there.

*(The children stand on either side of the New Year, who
addresses them and the audience):*

New Year. Today, dear Friends, my reign begins;
May it be full of peace
For you, your kindred, every one,
With joys that e'er increase.

May Virtue be your constant guide
And cherished friend this year,
While Faith, bright star, shall show the way
To the new-born Saviour here.

Let Hope and Love, those sisters fair,
The heaven-born and blest,
Companions be along your path
And lead to joy and rest.

Religion still your firm support,
May Angels now as then
Sing canticles they sang of yore,
"Peace on earth, good will to men."

The Spoiled Statue

*(The following story is told of the statue of David by
Michael Angelo, at Florence.)*

In a fair and ancient city
'Neath the blue Italian sky,
Stands a statue that has witnessed
Four long centuries pass by.
Long ago a block of marble
To that city fair was borne,
Marble free from stain or flaw mark,
Pure as pearly cloud of morn.
And the rulers sought a sculptor,
Bade him carve a statue grand,
That it might adorn the city,
Fair as any in the land.
But the sculptor's hand unskilful
Marred the beauty of the stone.
It was cast aside as worthless,
Left unheeded and alone.
Covered o'er with dust and rubbish,
Vanished all its beauty rare,
Long it lay,—spoiled, ruined, wasted,—
No one gave it thought or care,
Till a young and unknown sculptor,
Passing by with thoughtful brow,
Saw the stone and said, "An angel
Hides within it even now."—
"Take the stone and free the angel,"
Said the rulers half in scorn.—
Many a day the artist labored,
Until one fair summer morn
Saw the statue stand completed.
Then the rulers proud declared
He had found the hidden angel
In the marble once so marred.

And in place of highest honor
Glad they set the statue fair;
While the city rang with praises
Of the sculptor's skill and care.—
Who has heard not of that image,
Youthful David, strong and fair,
Fashioned by a mighty genius,
Michael Angelo, the rare?—
Read ye not a deeper meaning
In this tale of long ago?—
Story of a soul's salvation
From the depths of sin and woe;
When the great, the Heavenly Artist,
Cleans away each soil and stain;
Carves and shapes, until in beauty
Shines God's image forth again.

Legend of the Two Altar Boys

In far-off sunny Spain there stood
Upon a verdant mountain side
A stately church whose chime of bells
Rang morn and none and eventide,
Inviting faithful souls to come
And worship God with fervent prayer.
To ring the bell, adorn the church,
Was Brother Bernard's pious care.

To this good Monk the children came,
Of God and sacred truths to learn.
Among them were two pious lads
In whom the Brother could discern
Pure souls untouched by stain of sin.
It was their greatest joy to wait
Upon the priest at Holy Mass,
And near the altar lingered late.

Their lessons done, the two young friends,
When noon-day bell began to peal,
From study or from play withdrew
To take their simple midday meal.
Yet not far distant from the church
At any time their footsteps strayed,
And when the kindly monk allowed,
Within the sacristy they staid.

A fair Madonna there enshrined,
Embracing close her Holy Child,
Had won the hearts of both the boys,
And on them, they believed, she smiled.
One day with simple, childlike faith,
The younger boy looked up and said,
"Dear Child, most happy we should be
If you would come and share our bread."

O wonder of the love divine!
The little Jesus grants their prayer.
Descending from His mother's arms,
He deigns to share their simple fare.
For three successive days the Child,
To their great joy, became their guest.
Then loath to lose that presence sweet,
The elder boy made this request:

"Dear Child, as we have offered you
Our simple fare with joy and love,
Will you not now invite us both
To feast with you in your home above?"
The fair Child smiled; "Tomorrow morn
I'll come for you," He gently said.
"In my Father's house, you shall sit with me
And there shall taste celestial bread."

The boys with happy hearts made haste
To tell the Monk the promise given.
"O would that I," he thought, "might go,
And share with them the feast in Heaven.—
Dear children, ask your Friend divine,
Since I have taught and cared for you,
If now He does not deem it right
Your master be invited, too."

The fair Child smiling gave assent:—
"My angels shall be sent for three.
Prepare your hearts; to-morrow morn
All three shall come and feast with Me."—
At next day's Mass, the Monk and boys
Received their Lord with fervent love;
Still kneeling there with joyful mien,
Their souls took flight to realms above.

When All Were Wrong But Me

When I was a school-boy of curious mind,
And Geography's problems were puzzling my brain,
I maintained that the earth was quite flat and not round;
As I gazed all around me, 'twas perfectly plain.

My teacher was patient, explained the true facts;
My schoolmates all wondered that I could not see;
While I in turn wondered they did not perceive
That all were in error except only me.

The bright solar orb next attracted my gaze,
And with poetic fancies my mind was possessed,
As I watched bright Apollo encircling our globe
And riding triumphant from far East to West.

"All nonsense!" an irreverent comrade declared;
"Don't you know that the Sun is too lazy to move?
'Tis the earth that spins round him in bondage complete,
A regular slave to that Sun up above."

Such ignorance dense I abhorred in my soul,
And refused to renounce my own lofty view.—
They always opposed me whenever I spoke,
Though certain it was my opinion was true.

Then one day our teacher with bland, smiling face,
Related the tale of a fond mother's pride
In her son who was marching along with the troops:—
"They are all out of step except Johnny," she cried.

The story was short and the moral was plain,
As all the young scholars could easily see.
The other boys laughed and the girls glanced aside,
But why did the teacher just look straight at me?

The Point of View

Near the heart of the city a structure superb
Was rising in beauty as day followed day.
But the progress was slow and severe was the toil,
For the building material was stone hard and gray.

Near its unfinished walls were some men strong and skilled
Who were shaping the stones that would fill each its place.
Their work was the same, but the aim of the men
Differed much it would seem from the look on their face.

A stranger passed by and observing one man
Who with dark frowning face was employed cutting stone,
“What task have you there, my good friend?” he inquired.—
“I’m just breaking stone, and the work’s never done,”

Growled the workman, his gaze ever fixed on the ground.
“And you?” asked the man of a worker near by.—
“I am breaking this stone for six dollars a day,
Or else I would quit,” was the workman’s reply.

To another stone-cutter the question was asked.
With reverent gesture he lifted his head,
While his radiant face showed the man’s pious faith,
“I am building for God a cathedral,” he said,

Valedictory

Dear Friends and Parents, honored Guests,
To make you spend a pleasant hour
Has been our aim; for this we strove
By song and words and music's power.

Your presence here has added much
To those sweet joys all students feel
When graduation honors come
On school career to set the seal.

Yet not alone for selfish ends
We sought the honors now obtained:
We hoped to please you as we placed
Within your hands the laurels gained.

And now the goal is reached, we cast
A wistful, lingering glance behind,
And faces see of former friends,
Devoted teachers, wise and kind.

To them we now must bid farewell,
Although it is with fond regret.
We would, before we leave these halls,
Assure them we shall ne'er forget

The lessons wise they've given us,
Which like the beacon's gentle ray,
Shall guide us still in future years
Wherever hence our footsteps stray.

From schoolmates, who in years gone by
Have shared with us in friendship's name
The daily tasks or cheerful sports,
A kind remembrance we would claim.

If now we scatter like the leaves
Of Autumn in the passing year,
Yet Memory shall recall the bloom
Of friendships formed when Spring was here.

To Pastor, Teachers, school-day Friends,
Who yet with Alma Mater dwell,
We give the thanks of grateful hearts,
And bid you all a fond Farewell!

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